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ABSTRACT

The goal of this teaching model, which is designed to occupy approximately 8 class periods of 50 minutes each, is to improve the health and well-being of high school students through instruction in recognizing personal distress and utilizing effective coping techniques. Each of the six lessons (Introduction, Recognizing Our Stress Symptoms, How Stress Affects the Body, Our Lifestyle Can Reduce Stress, Coping, and Coping--Quieting Response) focuses on a competency, e.g., understanding that stress is a natural response. Performance objectives relevant to each competency are stated and activities are suggested for accomplishing each objective. The time needed for each is also suggested. Accompanying diagrams and charts which illustrate various aspects of the lessons (physiological stress, distress and coping, the physiology of stress, and a distress "prevention" lifestyle) are provided, along with a teacher's guide for their use. A bibliography of selected readings is included. (AG)

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IMPROVING SELF WORTH BY LEARNING TO COPE WITH DISTRESS

A Teaching Model Produced for Mid-Adolescents

in

The Ann Arbor Public Schools

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Ann Arbor, Michigan

June, 1981

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this teaching model is to improve the health and well-being of high school age youth through instruction to recognize personal distress and effective coping techniques. The information and suggested procedures contained herein are designed to help the teacher initiate a meaningful behavior change in mid-adolescents which will enable them to have improved self-worth, be more efficient in class, be better citizens, and lead healthier lives.

The time needed to complete the six lessons is approximately eight class periods of fifty minute duration. This should be expected to vary according to the level of teacher-student interest and the other variables which affect instruction time. Lesson five which gives attention to problem solving techniques could be easily developed to provide more detail in this area. The relaxation techniques in lesson six could also be expanded if time permits a longer unit.

By no means should the teacher feel compelled to follow the suggested procedures which are included. The author has used these procedures and they are effective in teaching the desired performance objectives. Each teacher, however, is the judge of what will work best with each particular group -- modify for effectiveness!

Please treat the information and suggested techniques with the purpose for which they are intended. Specifically this is to help many confused and mis-guided teenagers learn to feel better about themselves and become healthier individuals.

Teachers will hopefully feel free to call me with questions, requests, or comments about the model. It is imperative that the material is understood and that the teacher is comfortable with it. In this way enthusiasm will be generated and the students will become more involved.

Appreciation is extended to William C. Morse, Ph.D. University of Michigan, Chairman of Combined Department of Education and Psychology and Margaret Holland, Ph.D. of the Quieting Response Institute for their guidance in model design. Also to Lori Gravelyn, Tom Burroughs and Robin Franklin, Ann Arbor teachers, for reviewing the initial draft and providing helpful comments.

Lesson 1: Introduction

COMPETENCY - Understand that stress is a natural response experienced by all of us as we go through life. The manner in which our body reacts to excessive heat or cold is biochemically similar to the way it responds to fear, anxiety and excitement. An event in the environment or our thinking about such an event creates a response within our body. This is the essence of stress.

Performance Objective 1 (Suggested time 5 - 10 minutes)

Appreciate the variety of ways our thoughts, activities and perceptions of environmental events create stress. Suggested activities are:

1. Mention recent current and school events which have a direct and meaningful impact on the group. An event which has significant meaning to those involved is stressful.
2. Point out that physical activity is stressful. It is normal and good for some of us, but can also be unhealthy for some.
3. Mention an event, good or bad, to which most everyone in the group can relate closely, eg. an argument. A brief discussion and related thinking usually creates significant emotional changes in at least a few of the members which can be described as stress.

Performance Objective 2 (Suggested time 20-25 minutes)

Define stress. There are many definitions of stress. Dr. Hans Selye is an internationally known authority on physiology and stress. Dr. Selye's definition is: stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it. Cold, heat, drugs, sorrow and joy all create a demand for the body to readjust, and all induce several similar biochemical reactions within us. The nonspecific response refers to this multi-varied biochemical reaction.

Stress as a result of normal activity is good and usually doesn't have harmful effects on the body. Dr. Selye calls this eustress. Excessive activity or anxiety is, over a prolonged period of time, unpleasant or damaging to the body. This type of stress is called distress.

Lesson 1: Performance Objective 2 (cont.)

Suggested Procedure: Using the illustration labeled Physiological Stress, construct an overlay or copy on the chalkboard for visual reference. This sheet not only provides a definition but it also illustrates that stress is caused by good and bad experiences. A discussion guide is also provided with the Physiological Stress illustration which will help clarify what is shown. The explanation should also be helpful to those interested in having a more detailed discussion regarding Lesson 1 of the unit.

Lesson 1: (cont.)

Teacher's Discussion Guide for PHYSIOLOGICAL STRESS ILLUSTRATION

COMPETENCY - Understand the relationship between stress and the various types of life experiences.

Performance Objective 1 (Discussion Guide)

Define stress as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it.

Performance Objective 2 (Discussion Guide)

Differentiate between specific and nonspecific response.

1. When our bodies are subjected to cold, we shiver to produce heat, and the blood vessels in our skin contract to reduce heat loss. This is a specific reaction of the body.
2. When our bodies are subjected to heat, we perspire, and our blood vessels expand to allow more rapid heat loss. This is also a specific reaction.
3. In addition to the specific reactions described in 1 & 2, those same stimuli also produce a nonspecific need for the body to biochemically adjust to re-establish stability (homeostasis). These nonspecific adaptive functions are independent of the specific reactions described and are the essence of stress.

Performance Objective 3 (Discussion Guide)

Demonstrate that from the point of view of stress production, it is immaterial whether the agent or situation we face is pleasant or unpleasant; all that counts is the intensity of the demand (stress) which is made upon the adaptive capacity of the body. If the demand is perceived by the individual as being excessive, this becomes damaging or unpleasant and is distress.

Performance Objective 4 (Discussion Guide)

Demonstrate using the diagram that:

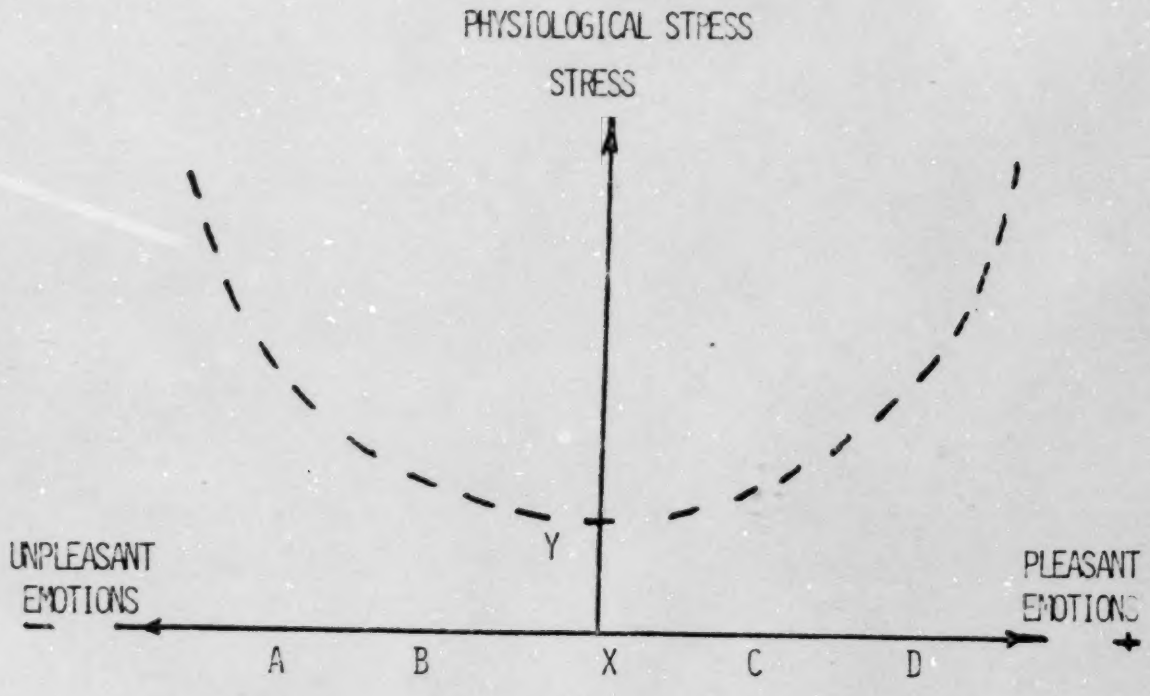
1. at the intersection of the horizontal and perpendicular lines (X) there is no stress because there are no experiences to which the body must adjust (death).

Minimal stress is found at the intersection of the vertical Stress line and the dash ARC (Y). At this point the body is theoretically subjected to very mild heat, cold, hunger, emotions, etc.

2. as the body is subjected to more experiences, there is more stress <u>whether the experiences are pleasant or unpleasant</u>. eg. Draw a vertical line from <u>either</u> point B or C to the dash arc. From this point draw a horizontal line to the solid vertical Stress line. You have now demonstrated that as one departs from point X and begins to increase experiences and emotions that we also experience more stress. To further illustrate the close relationship, now draw another vertical line from point A if you previously used B, or point D if you used C. This line is again drawn to intersect with the dash arc and then another horizontal line to the vertical Stress line.

Although we may feel that we react differently to pleasant and unpleasant experiences or emotions, the point here is that our physiological process to restore calm is the same.

(Items 1, 2, 3 at the bottom of the illustration are added to assist the teacher to remember the salient points of this section of the unit. The illustration is used during the discussion of the items.)



STRESS IS THE NONSPECIFIC RESPONSE OF THE BODY TO ANY DEMAND MADE UPON IT. (COLD HEAT, DRUGS, SORROW AND JOY MAY CREATE A DEMAND FOR THE BODY TO READJUST. THIS IS STRESS AND ALL PROVOKE SIMILAR BIOCHEMICAL REACTIONS IN THE BODY)

1. MINIMAL STRESS (Y) VS. DEATH (X)

2. NORMAL ACTIVITY - STRESS - NO HARMFUL EFFECTS

3. EXCESSIVE PLEASANT OR UNPLEASANT PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES ARE DAMAGING TO THE BODY AND ARE DISTRESSFUL.

Lesson 1: (cont.)

Performance Objective 3 - (Suggested time 30-35 minutes)

Realize that others are experiencing similar stressful emotions. (This exercise is very important since many youngsters do not realize that most of their peers have similar desires and fears.)

Suggested Procedure: 1 - Divide the group into sub-groups of not more than six per group.

2 - Have each sub-group quickly select a person who will record and report findings to the entire group.

3 - Allow approximately ten minutes to discuss, What events or thoughts create stress in you? (Stressors)

4 - When time is up, have recorders report findings verbally for benefit of entire group. Record on chalkboard or overhead projector for all to see.

Instructor should take time here to point out how many of the sub-groups reported similar findings. We are not alone in our thoughts and emotions and frequently it is helpful to communicate with someone about them.

Performance Objective 4 (Suggested time 10 minutes)

Define the goals of the stress and coping unit.

1. Identify stressors common to each of us.
2. Identify physiological distress signals.
3. Identify potential health problems caused by distress
4. Understand the importance of distress prevention and learn appropriate behavior.
5. Learn coping skills and relaxation techniques

Use illustration Distress and Coping - Goals to prepare an overlay or list goals on chalkboard for student reference.

DISTRESS & COPING

GOALS

IDENTIFY COMMON STRESSORS

IDENTIFY PHYSIOLOGICAL DISTRESS SIGNALS

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL HEALTH PROBLEMS CAUSED BY DISTRESS

RECOGNIZE IMPORTANCE OF DISTRESS PREVENTION BEHAVIOR

DEVELOP DISTRESS REDUCING LIFE STYLE

LEARN COPING SKILLS

Lesson 2: RECOGNIZING OUR STRESS SYMPTOMS

COMPETENCY - Understand that when our body is subjected to a stressor a reaction occurs. This reaction appears with a variety of signals (symptoms) which are both specific and non-specific. The symptoms vary in nature and intensity according to the degree of the stressor and physiological condition of our body.

Performance Objective 1 (Suggested time 10-15 min.)

Learn to recognize our symptoms of stress. It is important that we learn our individual physiological signs of stress so that we can initiate appropriate behavior to reduce it.

Suggested Procedure: Quickly Review Lesson 1, Performance Objective 2 where the nature of stress was discussed. Recall that stress is natural and that it is both good and bad for our bodies. When we exercise, we create stress which is generally good and is an example of eustress (good stress).

Exercise produces a need for more oxygen in our muscles so our heart must pump more rapidly to meet the demand. When our exercise is concluded, our muscles no longer need the extra oxygen so our heart returns to a slower rate. Increased heart rate is predictable, identifiable and a specific reaction to exercise.

A potentially frightening event such as giving a speech may produce the same reaction as exercise. We worry about forgetting parts of our speech and making a fool of ourself which is very threatening. As our anxiety increases our nervous system asks the heart (cardiovascular system) to beat faster to help us cope with the threatening situation. In this example, excessive heart

and breathing rates are detrimental to our thoughts, speech making ability and general health. This form of stress is known as distress or bad stress. (Using this example, one could point out that a small amount of anxiety frequently is helpful in motivating the speaker to be more enthusiastic.)

In these examples, an increased heart rate was a specific reaction to exercise and anxiety. Our nervous and endocrine (glandular) systems also react in a non-specific way to help prepare the body to meet the demands of the stressor and then to return it to its pre-stressor condition. The term non-specific refers to the wide variety of responses made by our many nerves, glands and muscles.

Performance Objective 2 (Suggested time 20 min.)

Identify several of our common physiological symptoms of stress.

Suggested Procedure: Use the increased heart rate examples provided in this lesson, Performance Objective 1 to begin a discussion and brainstorm session about our various stress signals. Write these on the board and then use the illustration Recognizing Stress. This should help serve as a review source and introduce the How Distress Affects the Body lesson.

DISTRESS & COPING

RECOGNIZING STRESS

DISTRESS IS BOTH NON-SPECIFIC AND SPECIFIC. OFTEN WE ARE NOT AWARE THAT WE ARE EXPERIENCING TENSION OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME. OUR WORRIES AND ANXIETIES CAUSE US TO DEVELOP ILLNESSES SUCH AS DIGESTIVE DISORDERS, MIGRANE HEADACHES, SKIN DISORDERS, FATIGUE, SEVERE DEPRESSION AND GENERAL LOWERING OF THE BODIES ABILITY TO COMBAT HARMFUL BACTERIA AND VIRUSES. MORE SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS OF DISTRESS ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO THESE ILLNESSES BUT WE ARE MORE AWARE OF THEM.

SOME SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS ARE:

RAPID BREATHING

RAPID HEART

PERSPIRATION

LUMP IN THROAT

STOMACH ACHE

TENSION

HANDS TREMBLING

ICL 69.

Lesson 3: HOW DISTRESS AFFECTS THE BODY

COMPETENCY: Understand the relationship between distress and the development of physical illnesses.

Note: Goal is to help everyone realize there is an internal process accompanying distress which adversely affects our health. Keep it simple and in the vernacular of the students. They are interested in what happens to their bodies.

Performance Objective 1 - (Suggested time 25 min.)

Identify the distress reaction of the body.

Suggested Procedure: 1 - Use the illustration Recognizing Stress to review the symptoms. Prolonged exposure to distress causes problems.

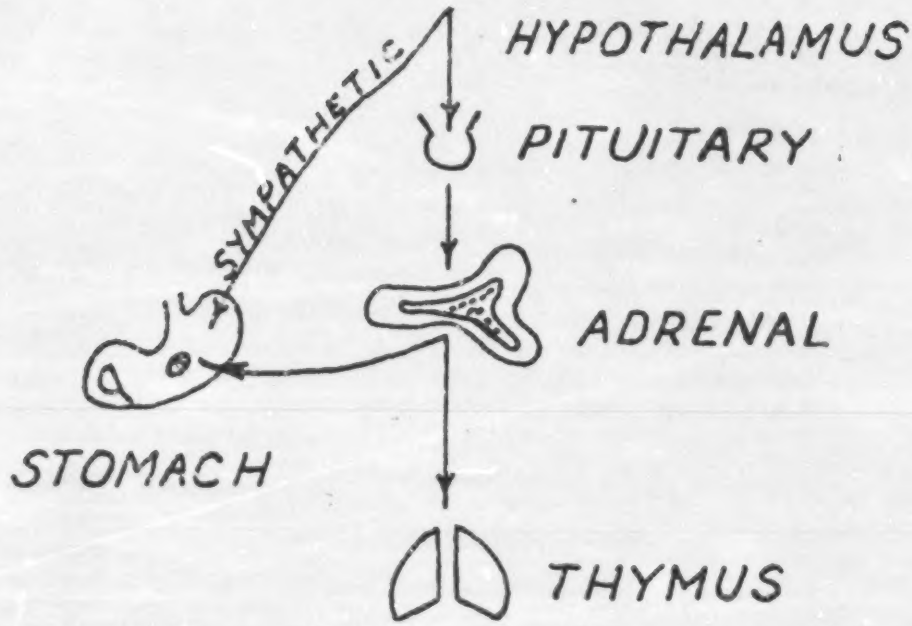
2 - Remind the students of the variety of stressors: physical trauma, infection, prolonged exposure to changes in temperature, decrease in oxygen supply, fright and other emotional stresses. In one respect, the response to all of these is the same -- the sympathetic nervous system is activated.

3 - A stress signal is sent to the brain. The hypothalamus portion of the brain activates our endocrine (glandular) system and induces secretion of an ACTH releasing hormone which is sent to the pituitary gland. The pituitary then releases ACTH (hormone). The ACTH then circulates to the adrenal gland releasing the hormone cortisol which does many things including metabolism regulation. eg. faster heart and breathing rate.

4 - Use the illustration Physiology of Stress to follow the steps covered so far in number 3.

DISTRESS & COPING

PHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS



PERCEIVED THREAT - HYPOTHALAMUS SIGNALS PITUITARY GLAND - PITUITARY RELEASES ACTH HORMONE WHICH TRIGGERS THE ADRENAL GLAND TO RELEASE CORTISOL HORMONE. CORTISOL AND OTHER HORMONES AFFECT VARIOUS BODY FUNCTIONS.

DURING TIMES OF NEED, EXTRA CORTISOL IN OUR BLOOD WILL HELP US BY:

- REDUCING INFLAMATION CAUSED BY AN INJURY
- FIGHTING OFF INFECTION
- REDUCING ARTHRITIC PAIN

WHEN THERE IS NO PHYSICAL NEED FOR EXTRA CORTISOL, THE HORMONE HINDERS OUR HEALTH BY:

- LIMITING OUR NUMBER OF ANTIBODIES WHICH FIGHT INFECTION
- PROMOTING TENSION
- DECREASING OUR EFFICIENCY
- ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENT OF HYPERTENSION, ATHERIOSCLEROSIS AND GASTRIC ULCERS.

Lesson 3: How Distress Affects the Body

Performance Objective 1 - Suggested Procedure (cont.)

5 - Some other effects of increased cortisol in our body:

a - Good-decreases inflamation caused by injury or infection.

b - Bad-reduces the effectiveness of our natural immunity system against bacterial and viral infections. The excess of cortisol interferes with the production of the antibodies needed to combat these infections. There is also evidence that allergies, arthritis, hypertension (high blood pressure) atheriosclerosis and gastric ulcers are related to an excess of cortisol and other steroids.

6 - It is also known that many other hormones are released during stress. There is much to learn about their secretion rate and how they affect the body. This study is called psychophysiology.

Performance Objective 2 (Suggested time 25 min.)

Describe the implications of an increased flow of cortisol to the adolescent body (Performance Objective 1, Step 5 - a and b).

5-a- Mid-adolescents are typically quite active and therefore, somewhat prone to injuries. The stress reaction of cortisol released to an injured muscle helps reduce the bleeding, bruising and swelling so that the healing process can begin more quickly.

5-b- (Suggested Procedure) Ask the students what the implications are if they have fewer antibodies to fight infection. eg. skin disorders and susceptibility to infections. (See Lesson 3, Performance Obj. 1, 5-b)

Lesson 3: How Distress Affects the Body

Performance Objective 2 (cont.)

An extreme level of tension adversely affects us all. We don't perform as well as we should -- tests, music and athletic performances - because we are too nervous to think clearly and react appropriately. Generally speaking, prolonged exposure to distress is a potential health time bomb because it contributes to physical and mental diseases and eventually death!

Individual experiences are usually plentiful in this discussion and will lead into the next lesson: Coping - Our Lifestyle Can Reduce Distress.

Lesson 4: COPING - OUR LIFESTYLE CAN REDUCE DISTRESS

COMPETENCY: Understand the importance of adopting a pattern of behavior which will help reduce distress. (Discussion point - Evidence of more stress related health problems and an increasing teenage suicide rate suggest we need to learn to cope more effectively.)

Performance Objective 1 - (Suggested time 35-45 minutes)

Be convinced that the way we behave greatly influences the amount of distress we experience.

Suggested Procedure: Initiate a discussion which will assist the members of the group to recall the stressors they discovered in Lesson 1, Performance Objective 3. Select one or two of the stressors mentioned and point out how an alternative behavior could have eliminated, reduced or enabled them to be more effective in dealing with the distressful experience. eg. A frequently listed stressor is an interpersonal relationship difficulty with parents, siblings, peers or teachers. Often these problems could be prevented through improved communication between the parties involved.

Have the students return to the groups of Lesson 1, Performance Objective 3. Ask them to list several methods they use to cope with distress. After a few minutes, have each sub-group report to the entire class. The teacher assists by writing the coping methods someplace where each member of the class can see the list. Some discussion is also helpful but the teacher should be cautious not to be judgmental about the various methods. Remember coping techniques are personal so if someone believes one works that's all that matters.

Lesson 4: Coping - Our Lifestyle Can Reduce Distress (cont.)

Performance Objective 2 - (Suggested time 45 minutes)

Define specific behaviors which will prevent or reduce distress.

Suggested Procedure: Use the illustration labeled Distress Prevention Lifestyle to construct an overlay, or write the item headings on the chalkboard. Each item, if incorporated into one's lifestyle, will play an important role in reducing distress. A handout with the paragraph information and a listing of only the item headings with an adequate amount of space between for individual notes may also be helpful.

An explanation sheet is also provided to offer the teacher a useful guideline which may be used to prepare a lecture or guide discussion groups.

DISTRESS & COPING

DISTRESS 'PREVENTION' LIFESTYLE

TOTAL DISTRESS PREVENTION IS NOT POSSIBLE. DISTRESS PREVENTION IS CLOSELY RELATED TO A GOOD HEALTH PROGRAM.. THE TOTAL PROGRAM INCLUDES PROPER DIET, REST, EXERCISE AND LIFESTYLE. THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES RELATE TO LIFESTYLE CONSIDERATIONS WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL DECIDES TO REDUCE OR PREVENT DISTRESS.

PERSONAL SUCCESS FORMULA TO INCLUDE MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

HELP OTHERS

RECOGNIZE LEVEL OF ABILITY - RATIONAL THOUGHT

BE POSITIVE ABOUT FUTURE

AVOID PROCRASTINATION

BORN EQUAL VS. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

COMMUNICATE YOUR CONCERNS

LEARN TO RELAX

TEACHER'S GUIDE - DISTRESS PREVENTION LIFESTYLE ILLUSTRATION

Lesson 4: Coping - Our Lifestyle Can Reduce Stress

Note: The information in the paragraph which deals with total health is very important and should not be overlooked. A balanced diet, adequate rest and an appropriate amount of exercise are essential elements to good body condition. These elements are closely interrelated with the lifestyle guidelines and these are items over which we have considerable control if we want to reduce distress.

Personal Success Formula to Include Meaningful Activities: There is no readymade guideline to behavior which is suitable for everyone. Each person should take the time to define the goals and behaviors to be successful. This includes working out methods to solve problems and release energy without creating conflicts with the self or other human beings.

We all frequently need to experience a feeling of accomplishment. An aim of life, if not the meaning of life, is to attain maximum self expression and recognition of our importance. By directing ourselves into involvement in meaningful activities, we are logically guiding behavior into projects which provide us with the opportunity to experience long term satisfaction and enhanced self-worth. On the contrary, if there is no commitment and there is no accomplishment the individual wanders through one distressful experience after another.

Help Others: By helping others an individual benefits in two ways. First, the helper's self-esteem is enhanced because he or she discoveres that they are capable of solving their own problems as well as helping someone else who may have greater problems solve theirs. Second, the person who has been helped is appreciative and sends goodwill signals to the helper. This enables the helper to again have positive - not distressful - feelings that the time and effort were worthwhile. (Ask if anyone in the class has witnessed this.)

Recognize Level of Ability - Rational Thought: An often overlooked step in the development of adult patterns of behavior is that of recognizing our level of ability. We need to give careful thought, and possibly seek assistance, to help us develop realistic aspirations which are commensurate with our level of ability. It is also important to relate our desire to achieve to this topic because the two are closely interrelated when measuring total performance. Individuals who are unwilling or incapable of recognizing their ability and motivation often are frustrated and experience an inordinate amount of distress. (This has happened to all of us at some time. Is anyone willing to relate an experience?)

Be Positive About the Future: Frustration paralyzes our efficiency while success enhances it. When we are faced by seemingly impossible tasks, we must recall our past accomplishments. With our self-confidence restored we can proceed with a rational approach towards problem solving or goal attainment. It may be true that "The future isn't what it used to be", but there is much to live for.

Lesson 4: Coping - Our Lifestyle Can Reduce Stress (cont.)

Avoid Procrastination: Don't subscribe to the adage, "Why do today what you can put off until tomorrow?" We know the deadline is near and the closer it gets the more distressful it becomes. (Many examples about proper time management techniques are appropriate to illustrate the importance of this behavior).

Born Equal vs. Equal Opportunity: We are not born equal either biologically or socially. This point should be illustrated and discussed to insure clarity. It may also be argued by some that equal opportunity also does not exist. There are, however, several examples of people who have combined their natural abilities with motivation and socially acceptable behavior to attain great accomplishments. We need to recognize these individuals and be positive about our own potential for future accomplishment.

Communicate Your Concerns: Poor communication frequently causes us to be confronted with distressful situations. Misunderstandings relating to the time and location we are to meet someone lead to anxiety, anger, verbal hostility, poor interpersonal relationships and increasing distress. Also we often times find ourselves in distressful situations which could more easily be resolved by sharing the problem with someone close to us. Improving our communication skills is important in both preventing and reducing distress.

The quality of communication and interaction in distress reduction is important. Research indicates that mid-adolescents typically discuss problems with peers before parents and other adults. Peers will often provide effective support by agreeing with the distressed adolescent that he or she has a good reason to be distressed.

Communicate Your Concerns: (cont.)

Parents, on the other hand, are too often insensitive to the nature and degree of their youngsters distress and as a result react to the expression of a problem with domination, disconformation or distraction. The adolescent' perception of parental response is undoubtedly true in many homes, however, it typifies a problem which is exacerbated by poor communication. We need to teach our young people how and when to communicate with parents as well as other adults. By so doing we will make available to the adolescent the people who can provide not only close affective support, but also the people who have years of experience in using effective problem solving techniques. (Cite several examples of good communication which prevent or reduce distress. Ask the members of the class how they share their feelings and concerns.)

Learn to Relax: There are many different ways to relax. Exercise, reading, listening to music and meditation are a few examples which are very common forms of relaxation. This is a very important behavior in distress reduction because through relaxation we are able to reverse the harmful physiological effects of distress. (Identify several other effective forms of relaxation used by mid-adolescents. Recall the information from Lesson 3, Performance Objective 1 which gives attention to distress and health. The use of drugs creates distress because the chemical substance used requires the natural body mechanism to be activated to rid the body of the substance. Depending on the substance used, short and long term damage to the body may result.)

Lesson 5: COPING

INTRODUCTION - Coping refers to what we hopefully discover is our successful struggle with stressors. Coping is prevention, and solution of problems, and relaxation. Relaxation is an integral part of the coping process in that it helps us operate more efficiently as we deal with our problems. We have addressed the issue of distress prevention and so we can now turn our attention to problem solving and relaxation.

Lesson 5: COPING - PROBLEM SOLVING

COMPETENCY: Understand the importance of a systematic plan designed to eliminate or greatly reduce the significance of stressors.

Performance Objective 1: (Suggested time 20-25 min.)

Analyze the importance of learning rational techniques designed to help solve problems.

Suggested Procedure: Divide class into sub-groups and then write a problem on the chalkboard to which most everyone can relate. eg. You were just informed by a friend that an acquaintance of yours was talking about you at a recent party. There were over a dozen people who go to your school at the party and they heard a great deal of false information relating to your moral character. How will you cope with this without creating additional problems for yourself?

Permit the groups to brainstorm the issue for a few minutes to see how many possible solutions can be discovered. A recorder should make a list of these in each sub-group. Next, have the members of each sub-group try to agree on their three most suitable solutions. A spokesperson in each sub-group will then give these choices to the entire group. These should be listed on the

Suggested Procedure: (cont.)

chalkboard accompanied by a general discussion of why they are good solutions to the problem. (The teacher should take the opportunity to comment about the advantage of using logical and sensible solutions as opposed to the impulsive type solutions which generally lead to more problems.)

Performance Objective 2 (Suggested time 15-20 min.)

Identify the major components of a plan which contains guidelines applicable to solving a variety of problems.

Author's comment: There are several plans each of which contains a logical sequence of steps designed to attain solution of problems. The interest of the teacher and the needs of the group should determine how much detail is needed in this objective.

Suggested Procedure: Use the illustration Problem Solving Steps to illustrate the key steps: define the problem, find alternate solutions, test the solutions, evaluate the results and, if necessary, redefine the problem. The illustration may be used to develop an overlay and a handout is helpful for student notes. The chalkboard is also a suitable alternative for the teacher to list the steps.

Using the Problem Solving Steps - Teacher's Discussion Guide, conduct a discussion about the problem solving procedure. The students should take notes to help them remember key ideas which will be helpful in future group work in addition to improved individual coping. As with other illustrations, a handout may be helpful.

Lesson 5: Coping - Problem Solving (cont.)

Performance Objective 3 (Suggested time 30-40 min.)

Learn to apply the problem solving steps to a problem and thereby attain an effective solution.

Suggested Procedure: Have the students return to the sub-groups used in this lesson Performance Objective 1. They should now pick one of the original three most suitable solutions of the problem and decide how it is applicable to each of the problem solving steps. Caution them to be very specific as they give reasons and cite examples. After the group process is completed, the teacher could use one group's results for a general class review of the key items. It should also be impressed upon everyone that this process of problem solving is effective for individual use.

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PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS

1. DEFINE THE PROBLEM

2. FIND ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

3. TEST THE SOLUTIONS

4. EVALUATE THE RESULTS

5. REDEFINE THE PROBLEM (IF NECESSARY)

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Problem Solving Steps - Teacher's Discussion Guide

1. Define the Problem

   The specific nature of the problem must be clearly understood. This is frequently a narrowing down process where we reduce the number of emotional issues involved and increase logical reasoning. GET TO THE POINT!

2. Find Alternate Solutions

   Encourage listing as many solutions as possible even though some may seem to be impractical or impossible. Write them down for later analysis.

3. Test the Solutions

   Think each possible solution through completely. What are the probable advantages and disadvantages of each separately, and what are they as one solution is compared to another?

4. Evaluate the Results

   We've now selected a solution and tried it.

   Did it work as effectively as we expected? If not, why not and would an alternative solution have been more effective?

5. Redefine the Problem (If Necessary)

   We all make mistakes and we sometimes need to take another look at a problem. Think it through again and with the additional information we learned from our first attempted solution we can now select another, and perhaps more effective, alternative.

Lesson 6: COPING - QUIETING RESPONSE

CAUTION: The founder of the Quieting Response method of relaxation, Charles Stroebel, Ph.D., M.D., has observed that QR training will change the arousal level in individuals. For diabetics and epileptics, this may lead to an alteration in the chemical balance within the body if they arbitrarily change medication. Since these people usually have been working with a doctor to establish a chemical balance, it is imperative that parents and possibly the doctor be advised that relaxation training is being conducted.

Performance Objective 1 (Suggested time 20-30 min.)

Learn that Quieting Response, hereafter referred to as QR, is a practical relaxation technique.

Author's note: It is highly recommended that the teacher review and practice the QR steps several times before beginning this part of the unit. The practical nature and effectiveness of the technique will probably be helpful to you and, therefore, easier to present to your students.

Suggested Procedure: 1. Inform the group that once the QR technique is learned a person can accomplish it anyplace and anytime within six to ten seconds without anyone else being aware of it. This is unlike most other relaxation methods which require quiet surroundings and a much longer period of time. (If the class

members are interested in relaxation techniques, some group or individual report work could be accomplished on Yoga, Zen, Transcendental Meditation, self-hypnotism, autogenic training and progressive relaxation.)

2. Use the Coping - Quieting Response illustration to introduce the <u>easy to learn</u> five steps of this technique. The students should be given a handout with note space between the steps or encouraged to take notes on their own while the steps are discussed. The teacher's function at this point is to review the steps so that the students become aware of the technique. The purpose of each step will become more obvious in a later exercise.

<u>Awareness of Distress</u> - The person realizes a condition of nervousness, rapid breathing, rapid heart, etc., which is caused by an environmental event or anxiety producing thought. The harmful effects to the body caused by this distress are unhealthy and need to be reduced.

<u>I Can Remain Calm</u> - Upon recognition of our distress, we say to ourselves, "I can remain calm." We are saying in effect that we have the ability and confidence to control this situation when given a chance to identify the alternatives.

One can argue that there are some situations where we don't have a lot of time for problem analysis. This is certainly true, and the QR is not guaranteed as 100% effective against sudden confrontation by a bully. It is also true, however, that it does not take our minds long to produce alternative solutions when we are distressed. If we are reasonably calm, we are able to think more clearly and function better.

DISTRESS & COPING

QUIETING RESPONSE

QUIETING RESPONSE IS A PRACTICAL AND EASY TO REMEMBER COPING TECHNIQUE. ONCE LEARNED THIS TECHNIQUE WILL REVERSE THE DISTRESS REACTION.

Q. R. STEPS

AWARENESS OF DISTRESS

I CAN REMAIN CALM

BREATHE IN SLOWLY - FEET

RELAX JAW, LOWER TONGUE, EXHALE

IMAGINE WARMTH & HEAVINESS

Lesson 6: Coping - Quieting Response - Performance Objective 1 (cont.)

Breathe in Slowly - Feet - At the same time we say to ourselves, "I can remain calm" we begin taking in a slow - deep breath through our nose but we imagine that we have holes in the bottom of our feet through which the air enters and ascends upward eventually reaching our neck. Imagery is important in this step. When we learn to believe that we have "imaginary holes" in the bottom of our feet, we can QR standing up and wearing shoes.

Relax Jaw, Lower the Tongue, Exhale - As we begin to exhale, we need to relax our jaw and facial muscles; lower our tongue which is uaually pressed against the roof of our mouth during periods of distress; permit the warm air to begin leaving our body through the imaginary holes in our feet.

Imagine Warmth and Heaviness - This step is accomplished simultaneously with our exhale. With our jaw relaxed, tongue no longer pressed on the roof of our mouth and air slowly working its way down and out of our body, we imagine the warm air leaving our neck, shoulders, arms, chest, etc. As the warm air descends, it leaves our muscles feeling relaxed much like we feel when we're lying in the sun and a warm breeze passes over our body.

Author's note: As the QR is being taught, it is helpful to repeat the process three or four times per class period to establish the sequence of the steps. Even the moderately interested student will learn them easily and, therefore, gain some distress relief.

Performance Objective 2 - (Suggested time 35-45 min.)

Analyze why QR is an effective technique in distress reduction.

Suggested Procedure: 1. Teacher may verbally do a QR with everyone. Follow with brief discussion to answer any questions and review the experience in general.

Lesson 6: Coping - Quieting Response - Performance Objective 2 (cont.)

2. The QR reverses the distress reaction in our body when we are subjected to real or imagined stressors. This is why it is effective in distress management. How the technique works to help us to better health should now be reviewed (simplified).

Author's note - Here again, depending on the interest of the teacher and group, lecture and discussion or group work is appropriate. If the group did project work as was suggested in Performance Objective 1 of this lesson, everyone has some idea of the effects of relaxation on the body systems. If no detailed study has been accomplished, the following additional simplified comments will probably suffice to convince students that a form of relaxation is important and QR is practical and effective.

Awareness of Distress - We know what a condition of distress feels like. We also know that we should and can do something to reduce the problem. (Any discussion here is a review of earlier portions of the unit.)

I Can Remain Calm - Reminds us that we are capable of enacting a rational problem solving process which will, except when confronted by stressors of an emergency nature, enable us to solve the problem.

Breathe In Slowly - Feet - By concentrating on our breathing rate and imagining that the air is coming in through holes in our feet we are accomplishing two relaxation objectives. First, the concentration on the breathing helps remove our thoughts from the paralyzing effects of the stressor. Our natural reaction is to want to slow the breathing rate down because it isn't natural unless we've been actively exercising. This helps restore our metabolism and other physiological

processes such as heartbeat to a more comfortable level. Second, imagery is an integral part of our autogenic training and this controls our relaxation of the smooth muscles. eg. stomach and intestines. As we progress through the remaining steps, imagery becomes increasingly important in total relaxation.

Relax, Jaw, Lower the Tongue, Exhale - We know that we are capable of remaining somewhat calm, and we have reduced some of the tension created by the real or imagined demands of our stressor. This has been accomplished through re-direction of some of our thought processes. We now want to accelerate the relaxation process by combining progressive and autogenic relaxation.

One of the quickest means of detecting and releasing tension is to be aware of the condition of our jaw and facial muscles. As we combine the actions of jaw relaxation, lowering the tongue from the roof of the mouth and exhaling the warm air from the neck area, we experience immediate and obvious relief from our stressor. As the warm air continues to exhale (descend towards the holes in our feet, we progressively relax each skeletal and smooth muscle group. As we continue to practice the QR and become more efficient at it, we experience an increasing degree of muscle warmth and heaviness.

Imagine Warmth and Heaviness - When we first begin using the QR technique, thoughts of muscle and stomach area warmth and heaviness are difficult to achieve. Keep practicing and be patient. Another technique is to think of warm water descending over our body, as in the shower, instead of warm air. If this works, use it! The important factors are progressive relaxation and feelings of warmth.

Performance Objective 3 - (Suggested time 20 min.)

Compare the feelings of tension in the various muscle groups with those of relaxation.

Lesson 6: Coping - Quieting Response - Performance Objective 3 (cont.)

Author's note - All of us have experienced a sudden realization that we were tense and uptight. The purpose of this performance objective is to help us reach the point of tension awareness sooner than we have in the past. We should let our imagination be our guide in developing exercises which personally work to promote muscle relaxation. Following are a few suggestions which may be helpful:

Close our eyes - Begin clencing the teeth-tighter-tighter-tighter- hold it. Begin squeezing eyelids together-tighter-tighter-tighter- hold both teeth and eyelids for six seconds. During this time, use fingertips to touch cheeks and eye area. Relax! Again use fingertips to feel the area and mentally take note of the difference. Practice a QR - remind everyone to think of the warmth and relaxation.

With eyes looking straight ahead and arms down at our sides, try to lift the top of the shoulders up as high as possible. Hold for six seconds. Relax! Feel the difference in the neck area. Practice a QR warm and relaxing.

While standing, hold arms out to horizontal position. Begin squeezing an imaginary ball in the palms of our hands - tighter-tighter-tight as possible - hold six seconds.

Relax! Arms down to sides.

Mental note of the difference

Practice a QR - feel how warm and relaxing it is.

Etc., etc., on down to the feet using the same ideas.

Create a condition of muscle tension followed by relaxation and mental awareness of the difference. Notice the <u>warm</u> feelings accompanying the relaxation.

Lesson 6: Coping - Quieting Response - Performance Objective 3 (cont.)

Note: Repetition is helpful until everyone in the group remembers the QR steps and is able to experience some degree of relaxation. Remember that the muscle relaxation should be accompanied by feelings of warmth and well-being. A daily QR reminder and a 15-30 minute practice session approximately two weeks after the completion of the unit are helpful reinforcement techniques.

EVALUATION

Note to teacher - In the introduction of this unit, you reviewed the five goals designed to improve health through distress management. If our clients learn to prevent and reduce the amount of distress they experience, then our effort has been worthwhile.

With respect to distress management, the important questions to ask relate to whether or not teaching the unit produced significant student behavior changes. The student evaluation sheet is designed to provide us with this information. Perhaps you will find the results helpful when the unit is presented to future groups.

It is recommended that the students be given part of a class period to complete the evaluation sheet. A time lapse of two or three weeks should occur between the last day of the unit and the evaluation.

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